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"One of the few contemporary and truthfully presented accounts of the White River massacre, in which N. C. Meeker, friend of Horace Greeley and formerly assistant editor of the Tribune was killed and his family carried into captivity by the Indians."

White Hill Mass only - levant mor at 50 June 1946

THE
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of 1879.

Why the Indian Bureau should be transferred

FROM THE

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

TO THE

DEPARTMENT OF WAR.

BY THOMAS STURGIS.

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Our Traditional Policy.

When, in 1867, after two years of incessant war, costly beyond precedent among indian outbreaks in its waste of valuable lives, the main body of hostile Sioux were driven by our cavalry across the British frontiers, our government and people relapsed into that indifference, or rather that absorption in private affairs, which is characteristic of all non-centralized governments and self-governing people, and is peculiarly so of our own.

The volcanic uprising of the Northern States in 1861, was not more national in its character than the indifference with which they had for years regarded the increasing murmurs of war until the cloud no bigger than a man's hand had overspread the sky and the storm had burst. We are too young yet to be far-sighted in our policy; too confident of our ability to apply with crushing force the pound of cure to trouble ourselves to apply through years of comparative quiet the ounce of prevention.

So it is with the Sioux war. The indignation and mourning that overspread the country when Custer's command died in Northern Wyoming, was forgotten when the Sioux were driven across the frontier save in those lonely households where stood a vacant chair. The fever was crushed for the hour what matter if the disease remained. The symptoms are destroyed, never mind the cause. Such has ever been the hand-to-mouth philosophy of our people, and never has it been more strikingly manifest than in our management of the Indians of the Plains.

Review of the Sioux War.

The pamphlet to which this is an addition, sketches briefly the Sioux war of 1875-77, and makes an urgent plea for the transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from the Interior to the War Department. What were the conditions of the problem then? An indian tribe was in revolt; the able-bodied warriors had left the agency where at government expense food and clothing were provided for them; settlers were being killed and stock stolen; the frontier towns were in danger. The Indian Bureau, with its machinery of agents, missionaries and contractors, stood helpless. The indian Sampson had burst the withes of gratitude with which the sentimentalists of the East believed him firmly bound. The sceptre had dropped from the failing hand of the Interior Department when the Army stepped on the scene and raised it. Through weary marches and wakeful nights; through wounds, sickness and death; through summer's heat and winter's snow; against enormous numerical odds led with military skill, and in a country vast, barren and desolate beyond conception; with diminished numbers but undiminished courage and devotion, the little army of the frontier, (a few companies of cavalry and infantry) conquered a peace, vindicated the authority of the government and restored safety. Did we profit by the lesson? Did we institute a system which should make such a revolt impossible and such loss of life unnecessary? I cannot say so. The Interior Department was now equal to the situation. The old method was resumed; the supervision of the army removed; food issued as wastefully and ammunition as prodigally as before the outbreak; murder and theft among the Indians went as

before unpunished. To-day twenty-five hundred (2,500) warriors of Red Cloud's band lounge about the Sioux agency at Pine Ridge, Nebraska. They are thoroughly armed with long-range rifles, and ammunition purchased from the camp traders under the eye and with the tacit permission of the Interior Department. On the plains around the agency graze twelve thousand (12,000) war ponies, ready for instant service. It is the best mounted, best equipped, and most effective cavalry force of its numbers in the world; and it is a magazine of gunpowder that a spark at any moment may explode.

The slightest cause suffices. Momentary dissatisfaction with the agent; his refusal of some improper demand; even a quarrel among themselves of which he becomes the arbitrator, may scatter these hundreds of savages over the country to kill, burn, and destroy.

History repeats itself. The recent outbreak of the Utes in northwestern Colorado has once more called public attention forcibly to the question of Indian management.

What is the position now? A warlike tribe is again in revolt; an agent and his assistant white men murdered and the women of his family brutally ill-treated. United States troops sent to their assistance have been waylaid, attacked, and while withholding their fire have been shot down. The Indian Department again helpless to protect its agents, or to support its theoretically humane policy, has again appealed to the army. With wonderful rapidity it has responded, and now on White River the troops are facing hundreds of armed warriors of this and affiliated tribes. In a word, the Sioux war of '75 is the Ute war of to-day. The tragedy is acting on the boards of another theatre, the *dramatis personæ* are changed, but the argument and the reasoning that applied to the one apply with equal force to the other.

Up to this moment the Indian Bureau has had ex-

clusive control of this tribe. Until the murder of this agent no soldier has set foot within the immense reservation selected for their use. Their love of independence and hatred of restraint has never been crossed by the slightest appearance of armed or forcible authority.

The agents of the Indian Bureau are to-day with energy, but with little hope, seeking for a cause for this outbreak that shall justify their proteges and lay the guilt of this innocent blood elsewhere. Let us also seek for the cause.

The Utes: Numbers and Character.

In 1874 the total number of Utes was placed by Gen. Walker, then superintendent of Indian affairs, at 3,800 souls. Of these 3,000 belonged to the Tabequache band, and were located at the Los Pinos agency, in southwestern Colorado. Their present chief is Ouray, whose name is now familiar to everyone. As a body they do not appear to have shared in the recent outbreak; but it is probable that a considerable number of their warriors answered the call of their northern brethren, and participated in the attack on Major Thornburgh's command. The remaining 800 of the tribe are divided into three bands: the Yampa, the Grand River and the Uintah, and prominent among their chiefs are Douglass, Johnson and Colorow. The first two bands have an agency on Grand River, in northwestern Colorado, and the third band joins them on the west, having a reservation in northeastern Utah.

These three bands are the Indians with whom we have to deal. They are probably somewhat more numerous than in '74. Having been for some years fed, clothed, and blanketed by the government, they have been exempt from the hardships, and loss consequent upon seeking their own subsistence at all seasons, through a rigorous climate and a mountainous country. They have been able to construct comfortable homes near the agency, and under these favorable circumstances have undoubtedly multiplied.

In addition to their own force of matured warriors, say 200, they have drawn to them as many more from the neighboring tribes with whom they affiliate, and this, with a like contingent from their own people in the south,

gives them about 600 to 800 fighting men, which forms the force now facing Gen. Merritt.

The territory occupied by the Utes covers with great exactness the western one-third of the State of Colorado. It is about 300 miles north and south by 150 east and west, and contains 15,000,000 acres, or an average of about 4,000 to each member of the tribe.

Even upon the liberal basis usually employed by the Indian Bureau, this immense territory seemed needless and undesirable for their number, besides greatly increasing the cost of feeding them, and in '72 negotiations were entered into by the government for their consolidation in the northern part. They were, however, never perfected nor the scheme carried out. The superintendent adds that the Utes "have thus far shown but little interest in the pursuits of civilized life, or the education of their children."

The opinion is generally held and expressed that the Utes have been distinctly and to an unusual degree friendly with the whites. In the abstract sense this is erroneous.

For many years before the pioneers saw Pike's Peak a war of extermination had existed between the Utes and the Sioux. The North Park in Colorado, has been the scene of more than one pitched battle (of which the writer has seen the relics); and it is their inherited hatred (in which fear of a powerful enemy mingles) deeper in an Indian breast than any feeling of antipathy for ourselves, together with their isolated position on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, that has prevented serious breaches between them and the whites.

But though extensive outbreaks have been infrequent, incursions beyond their reservation (large as it is) have been the rule rather than the exception; and many a hunter and ranchman in the North and Middle Parks,

fifty miles beyond reservation limits, has been murdered during the past ten years; his stock stolen, his ranch burned and his property destroyed. A dozen such instances have occurred this summer, the details of which can be cited if necessary.

Having thus stated the general conditions surrounding these Indians, let us consider briefly the events of the last four months.

The Murders at the Agency.

For a year past, and at the date of their outbreak, the U. S. Indian Agent for the White River Utes was N. C. Meeker. Mr. Meeker was for many years the trusted friend of Horace Greeley and assistant editor of the *N. Y. Tribune*. In 1869 he headed the colony that built the town of Greeley, Colorado. For several years he resided there, and edited the *Greeley Tribune*, and by his counsels and character greatly added to the prosperity of the town. Liberal, unprejudiced, humane, and filled with the best type of Christian philosophy, Meeker earnestly believed that the Indian of the plains could be civilized by kindness, elevated by education and made self-supporting by example and precept. He was fully in accord with the views of the highest eastern philanthropists on the question of indian management, and was selected by the Indian Bureau for that reason. He went to his post prepared to execute in letter and in spirit the instructions he had received. He accepted the position not more for personal benefit than to prove the truth of the theory in which he believed. He fought the good fight, and he testified to his fidelity with his life. He was the highest and purest type of indian agent. Under no one could the principle of appeal to the higher nature of the Indian have been more fully, faithfully and persistently tried. He proved by the circumstances of his death the falsity, the hopelessness, the criminal folly, of such treatment, unassisted and unprotected by armed force, being applied to the inherently treacherous, cruel and brutal character of the warlike Indians of the "plains." He died because the higher nature to which he would have appealed, the feeling of gratitude, of honor, of good faith, of respect

for promises (saving in some exceptional cases) *does not exist*.

Let us briefly sketch the painful story:

In the spring of this year Mr. Meeker, following the instructions of his Department, set his white assistants to plow the land about the agency buildings; endeavored to get the adult male Indians to aid in the work; and gathered the children, so far as possible, into a daily school. The sick of all ages he and his family personally nursed and attended.

From the outset the work and schooling were violently opposed by the Indians, their repeated complaints being that no more plowing should be done and no school kept.

Note the complaint. Not lack of provisions; not ill-treatment from a tyrannical or dishonest agent; not the infringements of miners, for none were nearer than Hahn's Peak, a hundred miles away; not the threatened loss of their lands or hunting, for there are no settlers nearer at any time than Bear River, fifty miles from the reserve; not the presence of soldiers, for none were at any time located nearer than two hundred miles; but unqualified refusal that their lands, for *their* benefit, should be plowed, or their children taught.

They met the issue boldly and at once. To feed and be clothed in idleness, at government expense, they were willing; but the first step towards making them self-supporting they determined to meet with war.

Nothing at any time did they say about "Father" Meeker, but that he urged on them the benefits of civilization, and yet, when their plans were matured, they killed him without compunction, and without the most trivial pretext.

And here it is proper to say that the mining discoveries in the North Park of Colorado, which are the only ones that approximate the White River Utes, and which have been so often cited by the newspapers as an en-

croachment on indian boundaries and a pregnant cause of trouble, do not at any point approach the reservation nearer than one hundred miles. The charge is so plausible and so readily believed at the East, that in spite of its frequent refutation, it constitutes a staple part of the indian apologist's stock in trade.

Events culminated in July of this year. Mr. Meeker, already an old man, was violently beaten and dangerously injured by a Ute chief named Johnson, whom he had greatly befriended, and who had frequently eaten at his table. The white laborers were fired on and driven to seek refuge in the agency buildings.

Col. Jno. W. Steele, of Kansas City, who visited the agency at that time on private business, found him at his home, propped up in his chair and suffering severely. To him Meeker made the following statement, which speaks more eloquently than can any words of mine:

"I came to this agency in the full belief that I could civilize these Utes. That I could teach them to work and become self-supporting. I thought that I could establish schools and interest both Indians and their children in learning. I have given my best efforts to this end, always treating them kindly, but firmly. They have eaten at my table, and received continued kindness from my wife and daughter, and all the employes about the agency. Their complaints have been heard patiently, and all reasonable requests have been granted them, and now, the man for whom I have done the most, for whom I have built the only indian house on the reservation, and who has frequently eaten at my table, has turned on me without the slightest provocation, and would have killed me but for the white laborers who got me away. No Indian raised his hand to prevent the outrage, and those who had received continued kindness from myself and family, stood around and laughed at the brutal assault. They are an unreliable and treacherous race."

To this he added that the whole complaint of the Indian was against the plowing and the school; that Douglass,

the head chief of this agency, had no followers and but little influence, and that the larger part of the tribe, under the lesser chiefs, Colorow, Jack and Johnson, had been away from the reservation all summer against his protest and orders. We now know that these absent Indians had been two hundred miles from their reserve; had killed white men in the North Park and on Bear and Snake Rivers, and destroyed their cattle and buildings, and had burned the timber and grass over immense tracts of country.

With indian sagacity, and evidently in pursuance of well matured plans, they early in the summer burned all the grass over which cavalry must pass from the Union Pacific Railroad to the agency. On every hand they traded their stock of furs and hides for rifles and ammunition of the best quality. Within six weeks from the outbreak the trader at the agency sold to them three cases of Winchester rifles and a large amount of ammunition, and from the unscrupulous whites, camped about the border of the reserve, they obtained further large supplies of both. Gen. Merritt on his arrival with the troops after Mecker's murder, apprehended a number of these men, and from one alone seized 12,000 rounds of cartridge.

The situation grew more threatening, and on September 10th, and not till then, the brave old agent asked for troops to save the white lives at the agency.

Major Thornburgh with a small command started at once from Fort Fred Steele, on the Union Pacific Railroad, but before aid could reach them the blow had fallen. When, after many days, the first troops reached the agency, they found the buildings burnt, and the dead bodies of every white man, including Mecker, who had been employed there. The bodies were stripped naked and mutilated in indian fashion.

No more causeless or deliberate murder; no stronger illustration of the savage instinct when unrestrained can be found in our indian annals.

Hostilities Begun by the Indians---Apologies for them by Agents of the Indian Bureau.

An effort has been widely made by the Department of the Interior, both through its chief clerks at Washington and its special and permanent agents in Colorado, (seconded by such papers as the *New York Times*) to convince the public that the Indians throughout this struggle have acted on the defensive only; have deprecated violence; have precipitated no encounter, and have been the attacked and not the attacking party. To refute this wholly untrue and malicious statement it is worth while to review the Thornburgh engagement; but while we do so it will be impossible for the fair-minded observer to repress a feeling of indignation that the Department that had called upon the army for assistance in a moment of great peril, induced by its own folly, and been promptly answered, should permit its agent to publicly charge upon the men then risking their lives for it, the provocation and prolongation of the difficulty.

Was Major Thornburgh, or were the Utes the attacking party?

Setting aside the murders, thefts and depredations of the Indians during the summer beyond their reserve; this burning of grass and other preparations to isolate the agency from the aid of troops; the gathering of warriors from adjacent tribes; their purchase and careful accumulation of arms; ignoring the murder of Meeker and his employes, for which absolutely no cause is alleged by their Washington apologists, (evidence hardly admitting of argument to an impartial mind) let us see

whether they wanted peace or war when they first came face to face with United States troops.

Entering the mouth of the canyon, through which runs the little stream of Milk Cr  ek, the skirmishers of Thornburgh's advance discovered a heavy ambuscade. The troops were stopped and a lieutenant advanced with a few men. He went forward waving a white handkerchief and giving every sign of a desire to communicate, and was received with a shower of bullets, the Indians shouting, in plain English, curses and the most abusive epithets! Had such an action come from the troops what would have been the comments of the Eastern press? Could language strong enough have been found by the Interior Department to express its horror?

Making no return fire, the officer fell back to the advance where was Thornburgh in person. By a rapid movement on their flanks, a large number of Indians threw themselves between the advance and the main body, pouring in a sharp fire. Having withheld his men from firing up to this moment, under a conscientious and almost suicidal observance of the spirit of his orders, Thornburgh then ordered a charge and fell gallantly in leading it. Gentlemen of the Interior Department! You will hardly wish to put over your own names a charge that this engagement was "provoked by the army." The five days siege that followed, the suffering of the gallant little command in their rifle pits, the magnificent march, rarely equalled in military annals, of Gen. Merritt's troops to their relief, and the rescue that followed are matters of history.

To one more incident of the campaign I wish to allude: On the twentieth of October two officers, one of them Lieut. Weir, were sent with six scouts from the camp of Gen. Merritt's command on White River, to discover a reported wagon road through the mountains to the south.

After riding some hours, Lieut. Weir and one scout separated slightly from the others to explore a ravine. Very quickly the report of rifles reached the larger party. Attempting to return, they were fired on by a body of mounted indians much larger than their own, and with difficulty defended themselves till dark. They reached the main camp at midnight, returned with reinforcements and found the body of Lieut. Weir within a half mile of the point where he left the command, and that of the scout not far from it.

Gen. Adams, Special Commissioner of the Interior Department, has made this event the subject of a report that has been widely published, and for what end? To perpetuate the memory of the gallant officer, or to record a regret that such a noble life had been lost, for it would have been impossible to find one of greater promise? Not at all. That is not the mission of the agents of the Indian Bureau. He alludes to this event, which has carried mourning to hundreds of hearts over the land, only that he may apologize for the murderers! Only that he may lay before the public an excuse for their act! He tells us *on the authority of the Indians* that they did not fire until first attacked. Let us calmly consider it.

Lieut. Weir was shot and died instantly. He had left the command but a few moments. The Indians who killed him numbered a score. Within half an hour afterward they waylaid the remainder of the party and made the attack—suddenly and with desperation, firing first, and keeping them surrounded for hours. They were fresh from the surprise and attempted massacre of Thornburgh's command; fresh from the murder of the gray haired Meeker and his assistants. Shall we accept as truth such a statement? A statement without shadow of probability, and to which all experience gives the lie?

Or, had Lieut. Weir and his scout, suddenly surround-

ed by an ambuscade of savages, been fortunate enough to fire first, would not every sane man have applauded the action? Had any white man reason to expect his life from men who had within a week murdered the old and defenceless, and had strewn the country far and wide with the corpses of white men?

I am certain of the verdict of my countrymen, whichever was the case. It will remember with reverence the memory of Weir and record his death as occurring in self defense while in the execution of a duty; and it will brand with indignation and with contempt the motives and character of the man who could make himself the mouthpiece for such an apology.

In touching at length upon the details of this Ute war I have had a special object. First: To show that no infringement of rights or failure to fulfill treaty obligations had taken place. Second: To prove that the indians have in every way assumed the initiative.

For many of our former Indian wars some distinct cause or series of causes can be assigned; some wrong or fancied wrong sustained by the tribe, sometimes trifling, occasionally serious. In this instance the historian will seek in vain. It can be characterized only as the natural and infallible result of abandoning the use of force (humanely exercised but still force, positive and irresistible) as a means of indian government and substituting for it the Golden Rule. The natural result of an attempt to change the lives and control the habits of a totally savage and warlike people, relying for your coercive machinery on Christian maxims and rations of bread and beef.

Character of the Indian Agents. Treatment of Mr. Meeker's Family.

Of the various indian agents whose dispatches, monotonous in tone, fill the papers, I have a word to say. Stanley and others inform us daily that "everything is quiet." They did so when hundreds of indians were pouring a ceaseless fire into Thornburgh's rifle pits, and when the shots that killed Weir and his scout were ringing through the woods.

They are exponents of the "policy." They are struggling to hold their positions and salaries. The truth is the last thing they seek, and one can almost smile at their chagrin as their turbulent and savage *proteges* daily give the lie to the agent's carefully prepared dispatches.

Of the many fraudulent combinations for robbing the government during the last twenty years, it is probable that none has gained wider or more unenviable notoriety than the Indian Ring. The amount of money handled yearly in contracts has been immense, the speculation enormous and the profits proportionate. Men of large means, and well known in Washington and the East, have been concerned in it, and from this source has come the desperate, and only really effective, opposition to the transfer of the Indian Bureau to the war office. Every effort to this end has been persistently contested by the Ring in its passage through the Houses, in the appointment of the committee, and among the committee after entering on its duties. The immense profits realized have furnished the "sinews of war," and success has thus far followed the judicious use of the large sums at their command. As details give, oftentimes, reality to a picture, I will say here, that a member of the Congressional

committee that visited the west in 1878, to investigate the wisdom of the proposed transfer, stated openly in Cheyenne, that before leaving Washington he had been offered thirty thousand dollars to make an adverse report.

It is not perhaps entirely irrelevant to add that the majority report of the committee *was adverse*.

To Commissioner Adams we wish to do exact justice. At considerable danger he penetrated to the hostile camp, and obtained possession of the captive white women. For the relief that the country felt that their lives were spared let him have full credit. But when he gives us to understand that they had been treated with kindness, and their persons respected, he states for the benefit of his Department, and his employers, a deliberate untruth.

The ladies were robbed, stripped and beaten by indians whom they had personally nursed in sickness, and fed at their table. Mrs. Meeker was carried half fainting on a mule for sixty miles, without rest, and from sheer barbarity without a saddle; and the Chief Douglass, their protector, according to Commissioner Adams, held a cocked and loaded rifle to the heads of the others while endeavoring to make them yield to his brutal lusts.

That I may not be accused of having set down "aught in malice" I here append a further verbatim statement of two of the ladies, made in Denver on their arrival. How much remains unstated can be only surmised:

"What do you think of Douglass, Mrs. Meeker, and how has he used you?"

"He has treated me dreadfully. It seems to me sometimes that he was trying to see how much torture I could bear without dying. He is the worst one of these Utes. Jack is a brave warrior, but Douglass is cunning and treacherous. If any of them ought to be punished he is the one."

The reporter turned to Mrs. Price and said:

"Mrs. Price, Douglass says he had nothing to do with

the massacre at the agency, that Jack's band did it. Is that true?"

"No, he was the man that started it all. Jack's band fought the soldiers, and Douglass and his men killed the employes. I saw him during the fight with a gun in his hand, swearing and drunk. All of the indians were drunk that night; they took all the medical supply whiskey, and besides they had some they got from ranchmen on the reservation. While Douglass was drunk he told me a lot of things that he don't know of now. If he had remembered he would have killed me. He arranged the whole thing, and the soldiers coming has made him afraid, and he is trying to get out of it now. He's the smartest and meanest of them all."

Position of the Army toward the Interior Department.

It is well here to point out the falsity of the position in which the Department of War and the Department of the Interior stand toward each other.

The Department of the Interior undertakes the government of 300,000 savages, scattered from Mexico to British America, and from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean; of characters as various as the climate in which they live. It undertakes to suppress and punish crime; to stop raids on the settlements and on neighboring indians; to confine the tribes to certain limits; to feed, clothe, educate and civilize. It purposes doing this through its machinery of civil agents, unsupported by any assistance from the army. Annually, monthly, this scheme fails in some part of the west, and the army are called on to save life. The troops scattered over a thousand miles square, of territory, are hurried to the spot as rapidly as steam and horse flesh can compass the distance. The cost is enormous. The first detachment arrives, is met by overpowering numbers, and perhaps repulsed, losing valuable lives. When the indians find themselves over-matched they retire. The old chiefs communicate with the agents of the Indian Bureau, and deny responsibility. The army is checked; is held for weeks inactive in camp, losing all advantage gained by rapidity of movement and the surprised condition of the indians.

Such is the present state of affairs on White River. One of two results must follow: Either a peace, dishonorable to the government, (and now greatly desired by the indians) will be effected; or Merritt will be ordered to advance, only again to be stopped midway by the In-

terior Department; remote from supplies, and surrounded by snow, whenever the indians find themselves in danger of being driven to the wall.

To sum up the situation the army is used as a police force by the Interior Department. It is degraded from its position and deprived of its effectiveness by rarely being allowed to originate or complete a movement. The Secretary of War is shorn of his authority as director of the army, and our generals become mere chiefs of police under the orders of the Secretary of the Interior. They are expected, with a skeleton of an army, to quell at a moment's notice any insurrection in our enormous territory, and are debarred from taking the practical precautions that would render such insurrections impossible. Under the present system they are compelled to see the accumulation by the indians, during the intervals of peace, of all the engines of war, which must render their subjugation enormously difficult when the inevitable outbreak comes.

Why the Utes now wish for Peace.

In considering the general aspect of the Ute question to-day one phase demands especial attention. It is one universally misunderstood at the East, and which clearly explained, should influence the opinion of every sincere man as to the policy to be pursued toward the Indians.

The position and theory of the Indian Bureau is this: That the Indians have acted hastily, are sorry for it, now wish for peace, and as an earnest have restored the women of Meeker's family.

How far the "hasty" action of men who had been accumulating cartridges for months, had burned the ranges and gathered recruits from various tribes to prevent the approach of troops, should be held an excuse for murder, is perhaps not worth argument. Their "sorrow" need hardly excite our sympathy. Their restoration of the women, (though in pitiable condition) *does* indicate a faltering purpose. They undoubtedly desire a present peace. Why? *Because they are afraid to go to war at the beginning of winter.*

They failed in their grand *coup*, the destruction of Thornburgh, as the Sioux annihilated Custer. They find themselves confronted by Gen. Merritt, with a rapidity and amount of troops of which they had not dreamed; and against which they dare not make a winter campaign. Though tireless and unapproachable in the saddle during summer, when the grass fails they are helpless. Without grain their ponies become too weak to travel, and die. Left on foot among the snowy mountains, with no means of carrying stores of food, tepees for shelter, or robes for covering; exposed to a climate unequalled in the United States for severity, the end would be speedy, even were nature alone against them. But they know by experi-

ence that they have far more to dread from the troops in winter than in summer.

With grain for their horses, heavy wagon trains for transportation, and warmly clothed, our men have repeatedly shown their ability to keep the field and do effective service through the coldest months. Gen. Crook's winter campaigns, against the Snakes in Idaho, against the Sioux under Crazy Horse, on the Rosebud, and against the Cheyennes at Slim Buttes, have been noted for their success.

For this reason and no other, therefore, do the White River Utes wish for peace. A campaign begun now against them by such a force as Gen. Merritt's would be fatal to them. Driven from one resting place to another through the winter months; their young and old, their sick and wounded dying from exposure, the spring would find their numbers decimated and their power broken. Not realizing the number of troops that could in a few days be concentrated against them, the young warriors have been permitted to inaugurate war. Now, seeing that a disastrous pursuit and defeat await them, and that the doors of the agency with its stores of welcome provisions are closed, the Utes undoubtedly "want peace" (for the winter), and any concessions in their power that will accomplish this object they will make.

It is puerile to expect that any considerable number of the men who attacked Thornburgh and murdered Meeker, will be surrendered to justice; there is no power sufficient in Ouray and his followers to arrest or deliver them; and it is for us to say, whether, under these circumstances, terms of peace shall be accepted; and if so, whether they shall be such as weakly condone the outrages committed, or such as shall vindicate the dignity and authority of the government.

What we ask of Congress.

For relief from this sadly mistaken policy, the people not of the frontier alone, but of the whole country look to the coming Congress. Every town in every county, every county in every state, has its sons in the army that is thus needlessly sacrificed. Congress can furnish this relief in one way only, namely: by a complete and entire transfer of the care of the indians to the Department of War.

The reasons for such a measure are stated at length in the accompanying pamphlet, and I will not recapitulate.

The events of the past four months form a plea for that transfer, written in letters of blood, and stronger far than any language that I can employ. In the name of Meeker and his family; in the name of the hundreds of gallant soldiers whose lives have been sacrificed in the suppression of indian outbreaks, during the ten years that have passed since Fetterman and his eighty men were murdered in northern Wyoming; in the name of the hundreds of settlers who to-day fill unknown graves near the homesteads they cultivated; we demand that the management of the indians shall be taken from the theorizing and ignorant civilian and given to the practical and experienced soldier. Taken from the men, who under the ægis of the Indian Bureau, have fattened for years on unrighteous contracts, and given to the officers who by character and self interest are removed from such temptations. In a word, taken from the advocates of a "policy," humane in theory but worthless in practice, a policy that has proved a very god Moloch in its destruction of noble lives, and whose failure has been for years written in mourning by many a fireside, and given to

men who have no "policy" to advocate, but the straight-forward duty to perform of governing the indians at the least cost of human life.

THOMAS STURGIS.

Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory,
Nov. 10th, 1879.